Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1316PA-1 for The School District of Philadelphia

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant builds the proposal on previous work in the four assurance areas as evidenced by:

- In the 2012-13 school year, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) transitioned to the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards
- A new scope and sequence document that (1) defines the skills and concepts that students are expected to acquire by the end of each grade level and (2) provides examples of how students are expected to apply the acquired skills and concepts.
- The Schoolnet IMS is a comprehensive web-based system that integrates student information, PSSA testing results, local benchmark data, curriculum and instructional resources, and standards information.
- SDP has 8 of 10 of the Data Quality Campaign's 10 State Actions and is making progress toward the last two.
- The SDP's Talent Development System supports all educators and administrators.
- SDP has spent the last two years implementing a new teacher support system.
- SDP is in the process of training principals, teachers, and specialists on the new Danielson-based evaluation system that has been mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- SDP is on track for implementing the new staff evaluation system District-wide for the 2014-2015 school year.
- SDP put in place a "portfolio of schools" model that focuses on supporting not only the lowest-performing schools but also the highest achievers.

By identifying six strategies that all schools selected to work on this project must promise to implement, the applicant demonstrates a clear and credible approach to deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized learning for all high school students, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the high range. Nothing is missing in this section.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project will focus on the entire K-12 continuum in an effort to (a) prepare all students for college and careers and (b) foster a sense of shared responsibility system-wide.

The applicant will select high-needs schools through an internal application process based on demonstration of the following:

1. Leadership commitment.

2. Staff commitment.

3. Evidence of vision in the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Comprehensive Planning Document.

4. School demographics.

A competitive application process will give schools a sense of ownership and accountability.

Based on SDP's size and grade-level distribution, as the tenth largest school district in the nation, 17% to 24% (25,001 – 35,000) of the total number of SDP students will participate in this project. Of these students, approximately 88%—depending on the schools that are selected—will be from low-income families.

The applicant has thoroughly described its approach to implementing the proposal. Therefore, this places The School District of Philadelphia in the high range. Nothing is missing in this section.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified the indicators that have a high predictability of whether students are ready for college or a career.

The applicant has identified policy areas that require change.

Key areas of focus for future District adoption have been identified for elementary, middle, and high schools.

An evaluation process will be put in place to track students longitudinally in order to ensure that the proposed initiatives are maximally effective.

Two pieces of the criteria are missing from this section: 1) The proposal lacks a high quality plan for scaling up reform which includes Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal and 2) How the reform will be scaled up to support district wide change. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the middle range in this section.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

One of the District's indicators of college-and career-readiness is scoring "Advanced" on both the Reading and Math PSSA assessments.

The proposed program will have an impact on literacy outcomes as demonstrated by gains on the reading PSSA for grades 3-8 and due to middle school interventions, will reflect improvement on the math PSSA for grade 8.

As measured by declining numbers of students scoring "below basic," the applicant theorizes being that, if the number of students scoring "below basic" decreases, the numbers scoring "basic," "proficient," and "advanced" will increase.

The reading and math performance goals are significant, ambitious, and equitable. For example,

- In 2011-12, 40% of all 3rd grade students were below basic in reading. By 2015-16 this number will be reduced to 14%.
- In 2011-12, 45% of African American 3rd grade students were below basic in reading. By 2015-16 this number will be reduced to 16%.
- In 2011-12, 42% of economically disadvantaged 3rd grade students were below basic in reading. By 2015-16 this number will be reduced to 14%.

The applicant's goal is to close the achievement gap for all NCLB groups so that it is at or below 11% by 2016-17.

The graduation goals are achievable and equitable, but not necessarily ambitious. For example,

In 2011-12, 63% of all students graduated. By 2015-16 the goal is 73%.

In 2011-12, 63% of African American students graduated. By 2015-16 the goal is 74%.

In 2011-12, 67% of Economically Disadvantaged students graduated. By 2015-16 the goal is 76%.

The applicant aims to raise the college enrollment rates for all students by 2015-16, by reaching students who may not be suited to the traditional learning environment or those who have otherwise been disenfranchised educationally.

Again, the goals are achievable and equitable, but not necessarily ambitious. For example,

In 2011-12, 53% of all high school graduates enrolled in college. By 2015-16 the goal is 61%.

In 2011-12, 51% of African American high school graduates enrolled in college. By 2015-16 the goal is 60%.

In 2011-12, 48% of Economically Disadvantaged high school graduates enrolled in college. By 2015-16 the goal is 54%.

The goals for increasing high school graduation are paced at just 2 to 3 percentage points per year. The goals for increased college enrollment are paced at just 1 to 2 percentage points per year. These goals are not reflective of a project to reform "programs, policies, and practices to improve college and career readiness" as stated in the reform vision. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the top of the middle range in this section.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant portrays some improvement in advancing student learning and achievement as evidenced by the following:

- The percentage of first-time ninth graders on-track for on-time graduation has increased by six percentage points in two years (60% in 2009 to 66% in 2011).
- The percentage of students graduating from high school within four years has increased by five percentage points in two years (56% in 2009 to 61% in 2011).

However, the District does not provide a comprehensive review of student achievement data over the last four years in order to demonstrate a clear record of success.

Analyses of early literacy and standardized achievement data highlight the need to re-examine literacy programming, as well as instructional practices. The percentage of students in grades K-3 reading at or above reading level, as measured by the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA), has decreased by 4.4 percentage points over the past two years

In 2010, the District launched the Renaissance Schools initiative, which consisted of two models: Promise Academies and Renaissance Charter Schools. This effort identified the lowest performing schools for turnaround and restart. Between school years 2010 and 2011, the SDP converted nine chronically low-performing schools into Promise Academies. Between school years 2010 and 2011, the SDP converted 17 chronically low-performing schools into charter schools. An external research organization found that both the Promise Academy and Renaissance School models significantly outperformed Comparison Schools in terms of increases in student achievement and attendance.

The Information Management System portal brings together critical data sets that administrators, teachers, and support staff need to monitor progress and inform instructional planning and professional development. The parent component of the IMS, FamilyNet, provides parents of students with information about grades, programs, attendance, graduation targets, test scores, interim assessment data and assignments.

Because the District has experienced a decline of 8.7 percentage points in math and 7.1 percentage points in reading from 2011 to 2012 and a stagnation over the last three years in dropout rates (with 31% of first-time ninth graders dropping out of high school within four years), it is difficult to see a clear record of success. In additon, the applicant does not present four years off student achievement data. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the bottom end of the high range in this section.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a high level of transparency in the LEA processes as evidenced by Philadelphia's "Education Accountability Agreement." which ensures that detailed information about the SDP's finances and mission are available to the general public.

The applicant states that through an agreement with the City of Philadelphia, the District posts detailed information about spending on their website, including "individual salary amounts and spending on contracted services" however, this does not appear to include a breakdown of school level specific salaries for instructional staff and teachers nor other non-personnel expenditures (aside from contracted services). This area could have been strengthened by providing report examples or other demonstrated evidence. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the middle range in this section.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes sufficient autonomy for secondary schools to implement the proposal as evidenced by:

- Beginning in school year 2014-15, State Board regulations will require students to score "Proficient" or better on end-of-course examinations (Keystone Exams) in key subjects in order to graduate from high school.
- Districts have the autonomy to allow students who score at the "Advanced" level on a particular Keystone Exam prior to taking the course to be granted credit without having to complete the course. This will allow students to demonstrate

- mastery of core content and accelerate their credit accrual, thereby opening the possibilities for advanced or college-level dual credit options.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides the Standards Aligned System a shared library of resources, tools, and materials to support personalized learning.

The applicant does not mention the extent to which the elementary schools have conditions and/or sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the middle of the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application states that the District "believes that having stakeholder involvement in the RFP process is a significant role as it allows them to have input into the actual delivery of the project tasks. Stakeholder involvement may include, but is not limited to, assisting with the design of the RFP and providing feedback on proposal submissions." This statement gives the impression that stakeholders were not involved in the design of the submitted RTT-D proposal, but will be involved in the design of the RFP for selection of participating schools.

Letters of support were included from a variety of stakeholders, however they were oftentimes duplicative and seemed to have used boiler-plate language.

While project briefings were held with teachers, principals, central office personnel, School Reform Commissioners, and the Mayor's Office of Education about this reform plan, the application failed to describe how stakeholders were involved in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on involvement and/or feedback. The School District of Philadelphia scores in the bottom of the middle range in this section.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addressed identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. For example:

- The District is a current grantee of the Gates Foundation for the Proficiency-Based Pathways project, involving five high schools, with 600 ninth graders participating. The Gates project, revealed that identifying literacy skill deficits early is critical to the engagement of older students in their learning pathway. Therefore, the proposal focuses on literacy in the early grades.
- For those students beginning this program at the upper elementary, middle and high school levels, an initial student-level analysis of English/Language Arts (ELA) data will inform the supports and interventions necessary to ensure that students are able to fully engage with online tools.

The proposal presents the following activities to address the identified needs:

- Participating schools will receive a Technology Integration Specialist (TIS), who will develop a local professional development plan for building the technology literacy skills of the teachers and will facilitate a local professional learning community.
- Activities, lessons, and other local development best practices will be available in the Schoolnet materials.
- A centralized online system will provide an up-to-date asset list of hardware available to students and staff.
- Working with central administration, local libraries, and community organizations, materials will be acquired that provide a high level of interest, engagement and text complexity to maximize literacy learning at all levels.

The District identified a gap in early reading skills and is focusing the work in the primary grades on a strong research-based strategy. Personalized learning in grades 4-12 addresses career and college ready gaps.

Because the proposal lacks a high quality plan for an analysis of the current status in implementing personalized learning environments which includes Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the bottom of the high range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a detailed plan for improving teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment as evidenced by the following:

- The *On Course for College- and Career Ready Indicators* provides the framework for the district's reform vision. Each grade band will implement this in different ways, with the central goal of empowering students to be both consumers and producers of text
- This year, the District has adopted and is implementing the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards including curriculum, assessment, instruction, and interventions. These new CCSS tools establish the foundation for achieving high school graduation and college-going goals.
- Deep learning experiences in the upper grades and high school, will be delivered by core content teachers through a project-based, career-oriented strategy for content delivery that brings real-world relevance and application into the classroom, integrating Literacy Design Collaborative tasks, multimedia creation, research, and STEM related inquiry projects.
- StudentNet provides every learner with his/her data, access to grade books and assignments, and links them to resources identified through their personal interim assessment results for targeted practice.
- Access to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives will be through the units of study that are available in the IMS and have, as a common thread, the taking on of different identities or perspectives across all of the core content areas.
- Model units of study with embedded assessment tasks include multiple options for students to work in collaborative teams to solve real-world problems.
- The SDP is partnering with the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) to raise the quality and fidelity of literacy instruction in kindergarten through third grade classrooms. Partnering with CLI through this RTTT grant will expand the program to 25 additional schools, bringing their professional development model, resources, and reading materials to 350 additional K-3 classrooms.
- The high numbers of struggling readers found in elementary, middle school, and high school classes indicate the need for continued guided instruction and practice with fiction, informational text, and content area texts. One-on-one assessment tools, combined with small group strategies, will extend the Pennsylvania Balanced Literacy Framework into elementary and middle grades classrooms.
- Teachers will use mobile devices and student response systems to collect data that they will upload to Schoolnet so that it is available in student profiles.
- Digital tools will provide middle grade learners with motivating opportunities to become both consumers (interacting with text) and producers (authoring new media) of content.
- At the high school level, the project will build on an integration of CTE concepts and core academic instruction at five to ten high schools.
- Extended learning opportunities involve community-based partners – via tutoring, industry expert engagement, and internships – in providing students with work-based learning opportunities that will count toward the mastery of competencies.
- Access to digital content for algebra classes will be introduced for middle grades math instruction. Beginning in 7th grade, participating schools will implement an online adaptive math curriculum. Embedded formative assessments will help teachers adjust instruction, while the individualized pathway created online will provide intervention and enrichment to all learners. Activities must be available to meet the needs of diverse student populations such as English Language Learners, Special Education students, and those students who have gaps in their learning targets.
- Based on the district's experience with the Gates Proficiency-Based Pathways grant, instruction will be organized into digitally rich, Common Core-aligned, units of study. Students will demonstrate learning through performance-based tasks.
- To extend learning outside the school, teachers and students will be able to access LearningNet—SDP's learning management system purchased and piloted via the Gates Proficiency-Based Pathways grant. At anytime, and from anywhere, students can access assignments, research, textbooks, interactive tools, and collaborate on group projects. Through StudentNet, students have access to their portfolio, resources and tutorials, and digital textbooks.

While the district discusses using the rotation model to meet each diverse learner's needs, differentiate activities and provide choice based on student interest, this model is not a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college and career ready.

The proposal lacks an articulated high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment which includes Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal. A high quality plan is required to ensure successful implementation and accountability. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the mid-high range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant thoroughly addresses providing all teachers and administrators the support to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards as evidenced by:

- Teachers' professional development will be designed to move them on a continuum from novice to expert in four learning domains. A digital badge will be earned with the successful completion of each domain. The four teaching and leading learning domains (1: mastery learning, 2: digital learning, 3: personalized learning, 4: literacy learning) will be addressed in both grade-based and school-based professional learning communities (in-person and online), allowing the district to create a set of professional development experiences and resources linked to teacher and principal professional development goals.
- PD Planner, the professional development management module available through Schoolnet, is the registration and catalog for all SDP professional development. PD Planner provides all staff with a template to draft their learning goals and monitor their progress.
- A Technology Integration Specialist will be assigned to each school to develop a local professional development plan for building the technology literacy skills of teachers.
- The district will partner with the Children's Literacy Initiative, to provide PreK-3 grade teachers the training, coaching and classroom and online resources needed to deliver expert literacy instruction through the use of on-going assessment and using that data to inform instruction.
- Middle grades teachers will be provided with tools for assessing student literacy skills frequently and authentically. Student response systems, blogs, and product rubrics used with units of study will be used to assist teachers in learning how to use multiple sources for evaluation, and how to respond to the identified learning needs of the individual student.
- The Literacy Design Collaborative and the National Writing Project will create tasks, modules, and courses designed to teach students to meet the new Common Core Literacy Standards while also learning to meet content demands at high levels of performance.
- Job-embedded professional development and reflective coaching will be established as part of the plan including: analyzing student data, case studies, peer observation or visitations, simulations, co-teaching with peers or specialists, action research, peer and expert coaching, observing and analyzing demonstrations of practice, problem-based learning, inquiry into practice, student observation, study groups, data analysis, constructing and scoring assessments, examining student or educator work, lesson study, video clubs, professional reading, or book studies.
- The Learning Management System, PD Planner, and on-demand access to student data, when used together provides the tools for personalizing, differentiating, and deepening learning.
- The district has developed and implemented a teacher evaluation tool, as part of the Professional Growth System. The tool is the formal instrument used by the teacher's rating officer, which leads to a teacher's semi-annual or annual rating. Aligned with the Race to the Top – State grant, the district is currently working on a Principal Evaluation tool, which is aligned with the Danielson Framework.
- In September 2012, the district introduced a new Literacy and Math curriculum aligned to the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. The aligned interim assessments for students will be used by teachers to measure students' strengths and areas of learning need, and to challenge students to read complex texts, write arguments, think critically, and solve problems.
- The district's RTI process provides a multi-level system of supports focused on improving learning for all students. The model includes early identification and strategic interventions for students at academic or behavioral risk. Through this multi-tiered system of support, teachers have a road map for facilitating data-based decision-making and instructional matching. Evidence-based interventions from the National RTI Center are available and matched to student need.
- The District will bring together all of the participating school staff, teachers and administrators, for a Summer Institute to establish a common set of goals, objectives, and understanding of a common instructional framework. During the Summer Institute principals and school administrators will participate in an executive level seminar that will focus on an articulated pathway from kindergarten through graduation.
- The applicant presents a rich variety of strategies, initiatives and partnerships for recruiting great teachers to an urban workforce and strengthening pipelines from District schools to colleges while leveraging alternative routes to certification programs to attract mid-career professionals and non-education majors who demonstrate content area strength.

Three pieces of the required criteria for this section are incomplete:

1. The proposal lacks a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals which includes Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal.
2. It is difficult to determine how the educator effectiveness system will help school leaders improve educator effectiveness and continuous school improvement.

3. It is unclear how the Summer Institute program will provide sufficient training, systems and practices to support school leaders and leadership teams in a continuous improvement process.

Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the bottom of the high range for this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fully addresses practices policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning. For example:

- Central office provides leadership teams and instructional specialists to work with schools in support of their plans, provides technology integration support, responds to data concerns, and helps creates a positive climate and culture. In addition, the District centrally collects, analyzes, measures, and reports on data in a common framework.
- The District provides flexibility and autonomy over school schedule, calendars, school personnel decisions, staffing models, and school-level budgets.
- Credit by mastery opportunities which include: 1) Whole-school reform models at 3 schools, 2) The expansion of CTE programs through a grant from the Middleton Family; 3) Proficiency-Based Pathways Grant; 4) Lexia Learning, an online reading skills program for early literacy development and 5) alternative education programs.
- Multiple Pathways programs provide options for students who have previously dropped out (or those with low high school credits) to return to school and earn their high school diploma or its equivalent. Transition services are alternative school settings for students who have committed Level 2 violations of the Code of Conduct, providing a program for educational, social, and emotional development and those returning from court-ordered placement.
- ELL and Special Education program progress and interventions are accessible via Schoolnet at the desktop of every teacher. In addition, the Core Curriculum Strategies Companion Guide provides teachers with information about best practices in effective instruction and differentiated instruction.

The School District of Philadelphia scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses school infrastructure components that support personalized learning as evidenced by:

- Through Federal and State sponsored grants such as Classrooms for the Future, low interest Qualified Zone Academy bonds, and the Title IID, Enhancing Education through Technology the District provides technology-infused classrooms.
- SDP has developed an Information Technology Career Pipeline to provide students with opportunities to excel in careers that interest them while meeting the needs of the new economy. Now concluding its eighth year, is available to Philadelphia public school students and recent graduates.
- The SDP IT Help Desk serves as a technical support team that provides computing support services over the telephone, through fax, and via email to employees and partners.
- The City of Philadelphia, in partnership with a variety of city and community agencies and organizations provides digital access to the public through: Comcast Internet Essentials, SDP Parent University, Freedom Rings Partnership, and Free Library of Philadelphia.
- Through a partnership with Pearson Learning and the adoption of their Schoolnet instructional management system suite, the District has created four unique portal views to academic data and instructional resources - each specifically tailored to the role of an administrator, teacher, student or parent.
- The enterprise operational data store, based upon Oracle Corporation's database system and tools serves as both the gateway and repository for retrieving and serving data from and to all critical information systems, internally as well as externally.

The School District of Philadelphia scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes a process to provide timely and regular feedback to initiative implementers on progress. For example:

- The District Office of Research and Evaluation, in consultation with an external evaluator, will conduct a mixed-method, quasi-experimental, cluster-randomized evaluation with approximately 70 RTTT schools in the District.
- The evaluation will focus on the degree to which the program achieves its intended short- and long-term outcomes, while also examining key elements of program implementation to facilitate replication and additional testing in other settings.
- The District will use a sampling design in which program implementation and impacts are examined using student, teacher, program, and school data focusing on approximately 100 schools for which the program is most likely to contribute to improved student performance and college- and career-readiness.
- The sample will lead to approximately 70 schools, approximately 1,700 classrooms, and approximately 50,000 students that data will be collected on.
- Program implementation data will be collected through structured interviews, document review and focus groups and is scheduled for the beginning and end of each year during the grant.
- Program impact data will be collected through student assessments, parent surveys, teacher surveys, school records, and principal surveys.

Because the proposal does not address how the applicant will publicly share information on the quality of its investments, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the middle of the high range.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District will produce monthly data briefs for program and comparison schools to monitor student outcomes on a regular basis.

Quarterly reports will be distributed at the quarterly evaluation meetings and used as a basis for discussing progress toward program goals and fidelity of implementation.

Data briefs for external stakeholders will be prepared at the end of each year.

Because the applicant does not address strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with external stakeholders, in other words any sort of feedback loop or two way communication, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the low end of the high range in this section.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a very well thought through, research-based rationale for the selection of performance measures.

The applicant provided 11 performance measures.

The proposal does not include the two required teacher and principal effectiveness performance indicators. The District, through the state RRT initiative, is in the process of implementing the principal and teacher evaluation systems, as well as the data systems that will allow the match of student, teacher, and principal data. By the 2014-2015 school year, these systems are expected to have been fully implemented and functional, and therefore 2014-2015 will serve as the baseline year.

The applicant provided an insightful plan to review and improve measures over time if insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

The proposal sets fully aligned, well thought through, and achievable targets but not necessarily ambitious as evidenced by:

- The percentage of participating students (all grades) who received an 80 or above for final course grade in English from 56% in 2011-12 increased to 66% in 2015-16 seems like low expectations.
- The percentage of participating grade K-3 students who are absent for more than 10% of enrolled school days from 23% in 2011-12 reduced to 16% in 2015-16. Just 7 percentage point reduction in 4 years seems like low expectations.

Because the applicant did not include progress measures for effective teachers and principals and some of the performance

measures were not necessarily ambitious, the School District of Philadelphia scores in the low end of the high range in this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant does not respond to this criterion directly, evidence of program evaluation can be found in sections E1 and E3. However, there is no discussion of how the District will more productively use time, staff, money or other resources nor how the District will evaluate the effectiveness of its investments. Therefore the School District of Philadelphia scores in the low end of the middle range for this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Race to the Top – District grant funds will be used for the development and implementation of personalized learning environments.

This proposal will be implemented with approximately 1,000 teachers, serving 28,000-35,000 students as identified through an application process within 100 days of the award

Proposal clearly sets out a detailed and well thought through budget overview and budget narrative for each of the following four projects:

1. Early Literacy ($10,736,100)

2. Elementary/Middle Blended learning ($6,421,704)

3. High School ($7,322,347)

4. Professional Development/Resource Development ($15,519,849)

Other funds will be used to support the project as follows:

- RTT-S $11,112,128 for educator effectiveness tools.
- SIG: $11,900,000 for Cohort 1 persistently low achieving schools and $2,500,000 for Cohort 2 persistently low achieving schools.
- Title I: $150,227,689 for Technology Integration Specialists
- General Funds: $502,561 for Educational Technology Directors
- Gates Foundation: $2,940,000 for LearningNet management system and proficiency-based pathways.
- Middleton Family: $5,700,000 TE programming and professional development.

The proposal identifies all funds that will support the project, the budget is reasonable and sufficient, and identifies the only ongoing operational costs as the General Funded activities. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Evidence of state support for sustainability is the new teacher evaluation project which drastically changes the way teachers are evaluated to include 50% of the rating based on multiple measures of student performance.

Evidence of local government support for sustainability is the Mayor's Plan for the City which specifies goals to improve high school graduation and college matriculation and completion rates, through improved literacy education.

Other examples of sustainability of project goals include:

- Gates Foundation's Proficiency-Based Pathways (PBP) project provides the vision and tools necessary for the implementation of an innovative approach to infusing high expectations and academic rigor.

- Schoolnet was built over a number of years of receiving U.S. Department of Education Title II D funding, coupled with aggressive professional development and the commitment of District leadership to require a culture of data-driven instructional planning and decision making.
- Adoption of the instructional management system as an integral system for day-to-day operations was slow and deliberate, adding modules and tools to meet the needs of the community as it evolved.
- Foundational systems, once started through grant funding, then became part of the operation budget for the District.

Because there was no evidence of local government financial support, nor a high quality plan for sustainability which includes Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal. The School District of Philadelphia scores in the top of the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**10**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes integration of public and private resources in partnership to augment the school's resources to address the social needs of high risk students.

The project includes the following components:

- The School District of Philadelphia (SDP), the City of Philadelphia and The Penn Center for Educational Leadership, the Penn Child Research Center, and the National Center on Fathers and Families -- all at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) serving Pre-Kindergarten children in Philadelphia.
- Schools will establish a program of action that creates a positive, seamless academic trajectory for students from early childhood to third grade and promotes long-term commitment from teachers, school administrators, and health and human services providers.
- Tracking indicators include: 1) Kids Integrated Data System for research and evaluation to improve the public health, social, and educational services to children and youth; 2) The EPIC Integrated Check-Ins standardized, direct assessments nested in the EPIC Curriculum; 3) Problems in Classroom Engagement Scale a 15-item inventory designed to measure salient dimensions of academic and social engagement in the classroom.
- EPIC uses assessment as a tool that keeps teachers informed of students' progress, engages parents in their children's education through home-based activities, and involves teachers in a learning community of their own, where they can share ideas and problems and contribute to building the curriculum.
- Scale up includes: 1) Expand PCES use from Pre-K-3; 2) Expand EPIC into District Pre-K; and 3) Create a system of mentor teachers.
- The integration of education and social services as a partnership within participating schools provides students and families with easy accessibility to additional support and interventions. With social services on site, students are more efficiently matched with agencies and interventions at a much earlier age, thereby increasing the likelihood for success.
- Professional development on the use of the EPIC ICIs and PCES will be provided to all staff build capacity for the assessment of student needs and assets.
- The EPIC Learning Community, like the EPIC Curriculum, provides ongoing learning opportunities to support educators' professional development including building efficacy and leadership.
- Parents and famlies are engaged through Home Connections, weekly family assignments distributed by teachers to be completed throughout the year, to build and strengthen relationships within a child's home context.
- EPIC assessment tools will allow staff to routinely assess progress, maximize impact, and resolve challenges.

The applicant has identified well aligned, and appropriate performance measures. For example, "Increase the number of students reading on grade level in Kindergarten through 3rd grade" and "Decrease the number of K-3 students who are chronically absent," and "Increase the number of parents of Pre-K students who are engaged in their child's school progress."

The School District of Philadelphia scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a cogent and comprehensive plan to improve learning and teaching through personalized learning.

The proposal establishes a continuous pathway for students beginning in the early grades with a focus on literacy skills, then introducing additional blended and independent learning strategies as students move through the continuum. The Early Literacy project component addresses a critical need in the community, closing the gap for those children who begin their formal schooling with language and social/emotional deficits that hinder their progress. The Children's Literacy Initiative and the Child Research Center at the Graduate School of Education University of Pennsylvania will provide the foundational layer for this project providing professional development, in-class coaching, materials, and assessments. Technology will be introduced to give students multiple modes for interacting with text.

The Elementary/Middle Grades project continues the focus on literacy learning with a partner who will be identified through the RFP process to provide professional development, assessment support, and instructional support to continue a balanced literacy approach to the upper grades. Students will begin to interact with online learning tools through LearningNet, the District's learning management system to extend classroom instruction outside the school day. Beginning in 6th grade, middle school students will be introduced to a blended learning, adaptive math program and project-based STEM units of study.

The High School project builds on the successes and lessons learned from the Gates Foundation project. In addition to using Educurious for the English 1 curriculum, the Biology modules, built on the same principles, will also be implemented. Moving students to a more proficiency-based model, the adaptive math curriculum will serve students as they move towards mastery.

These efforts specifically target increased opportunities to succeed relative to the On Course for College- and Career-Ready Indicators, working with 30-35 schools across the K-12 continuum selected through an application process. Selected schools will promise to implement the following strategies:

1. Implement intensive literacy support in the early grades.

2. Provide supplemental literacy supports from grades 4-8.

3. Establish a blended mathematics-learning model ("in seat" learning and digital learning options) in the middle grades.

4. Provide STEM related project-based career explorations in the middle grades.

5. Integrate strategies from Career & Technical Education (CTE).

6. Increase student options through modularized online learning.

Total	210	171

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has designed a supplemental project that is clear and discrete, but not necessarily innovative. The need is clear and it directly supports personalized learning environments for students.

This project includes:

- The implementation of a dual language Spanish and Latino Studies program in one of the comprehensive high schools serving large populations (i.e., greater than 30%) of Latino students.
- The goal of this project is to provide a two-way language immersion program, where approximately half of the students are native speakers of the partner language and approximately half of the students are native speakers of English.
- This pilot program seeks to support older English language learners in a high-quality, secondary school curriculum that meets their language acquisition needs and provides them with key skills to ensure they are prepared for college and

- career success.
- English-proficient students will be required to take two periods of Spanish per day, five days a week.
- All students will take AP Spanish in their senior year.
- For English-proficient students, classes will increase usage of Spanish in content classes, reaching up to 25/75 (25% Spanish/75% English) by senior year.
- Half of the students in the program will be dedicated to Spanish-dominant students and will be open to immigrants recently arrived from Spanish-speaking countries.
- The school will utilize bilingual teachers for students with little or no knowledge of the English language.
- In Years Two and Three, English Language Learner students will take three periods of English a day with some English as Second Language instruction being content-based.
- The program will be built around a Career and Technical Education program in Communications. The coursework allows students to reinforce, apply and transfer their academic knowledge and skills to a variety of activities, problems, and settings.
- The program will be run between Olney Charter High School, a charter school managed by ASPIRA, and The School District of Philadelphia. ASPIRA has long provided bilingual Spanish programs through its charter schools in Philadelphia. This relationship will build upon the SDP's expertise in offering CTE programs and ASPIRA's ability to successfully educate ELL students.
- The evaluation design for the dual language program will include the collection and analysis of data throughout the course of the project in order to shape decision-making and to aid program improvement. In addition, the evaluation will look at student and school outcome measures each year and at the end of the grant period. Outcomes for each school will be compared, as will change in the schools over time.

The proposed budget is sufficiently detailed and adequate to support the project.

The proposal includes activities but does not include all of the elements of a high quality plan for the project (missing Key Goals, Timeline, and Deliverables for each goal). In addition, two-way language immersion programs are not necessarily innovative nor replicable. Therefore, The School District of Philadelphia supplemental budget request scores in the bottom of the high range.

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1316PA-2 for The School District of Philadelphia

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a robustly comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The vision builds on four assurance areas; a). College-and Career-Ready Standards and Assessment, b.) Data Systems and Data Use, c.) Recruiting, Developing, Rewarding and Retaining Effective Teachers, and d.) Turning around the Lowest Achieving Schools. The approach that the narrative outlines is one that builds on community partnerships and a web-based data portal to pull together curricular, instructional resources and student progress to inform educators, students, and family in the academic improvement process. The new evaluation system will provide leaders with more than evaluative components but also allow for targeted PD focusing feedback. The vision articulates a clear path to improved professional practices by focusing on skills educators need to develop in order to provide necessary personalized learning experience which will ensure academic success.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's approach to implementing a reform proposal is to focus on the K-12 continuum in order to ensure all students are prepared for college or career. The applicant proposes to select schools by using a School Participation Selection Process which will be based on the following criteria; Leadership Commitment, Staff commitment, individual school's evidence of a vision in the P. Depart. Of Edu. School Comprehensive Planning Document, and school demographics. Ensuring that due diligence and sufficient infrastructure/staff capacities exist to execute the proposed plan. The total estimated number of participating students is between 25,001-35,000. Of these students approximately 88% (depending on the schools that will be selected) will be from low-income families. Based on the provided rationale, specifically the nature of the proposed competitive application process, this approach to implementation is robust and will ensure a sense of ownership and accountability for participating schools while providing the necessary infrastructure to execute the proposed reform package.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies the indicators of high predictability for college or career readiness in students as well as reform activities that should be in place at the end of the grant in order for the applicant to reach outcome goals. The applicant then indicated that the reform proposal (specifically the indicators that have a high predictability of whether students are ready for college or a career) will provide a firm foundation to scale up and translate into meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond the participating schools. The above statement about scaling up the reforms does not equate to a concrete plan to scale up the proposed reforms district wide. However, the narrative does provide deliverables to support the meaningful reform proposal as well as outlines key areas of focus for elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, the narrative outlines an evaluation process which will be implemented to track student data to ensure that the proposed initiatives have the maximal educational impact for students. Finally, the proposal narrative does not provide essential components of a High Quality Plan in the form of a timeline or persons responsible for scaling the reform into meaningful district wide change beyond the participating schools. These missing critical components result in a reduction of points.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The project proposal will have an impact on literacy outcomes as demonstrated by increases on standardized reading assessments in grades 3-8. Additionally, the reading and math performance goals are ambitious. For example, the applicant proposes to decrease the number of 3rd grade students who score below basic from 40% to 16% and the district goal is to close the achievement gap for all subgroups to at or below 11% by 2016-17. Thus, for the most part, the applicant's vision is supported by ambitious annual goals, with the noticeable exception of increasing the graduation and college enrollment rates. The targets for increasing graduation rates and college enrollment rates which are mild at 2%- 3% in relationship to the very ambitious goals for decreasing achievement gaps and improving student gains across the board. The conservative projected gains in these areas calls into question the overall projected impact of the proposal on student achievement. Finally, the applicant did not include the target goals for the state so it is not evident that the district's goals meet or exceed state ESEA targets.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a varied record of success over the last four years. One partnership with PCCCS (aimed to increase graduation rates and double baccalaureate attainment) has provided some early success by increasing 6% of ninth graders on track for on-time graduation and 5% of students graduating from high school within four years between 2009 and 2011. On the other hand the early literacy program and middle school students' achievement in math and ELA have had considerable decreases over the last two years. At the same time, the dropout rate has stagnated. The narrative does provide instances of lowest performing school reform in the forms Turnaround Model and Charter schools. Each of these models has had guarded success rates with the greater success rate in the Charter schools. Finally, the Information Management System (IMS) enhances the capability and capacity of teachers, students, and families to progress monitor, set alerts, and leverage a wealth of data resources. While it is true that the system, as a whole, has had a varied success rate with student achievement, the

new leadership and community partners serve as a firm platform to enhance student achievement.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a description of a high level of transparency in LEA processes and practices. However the applicant does not have sufficient information in the narrative to ensure a high level of transparency in regards to making public at the school level expenditures and investments. The LEA has entered into an agreement with the Philadelphia's Mayor's office and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Education Accountability Agreement" which ensures that detailed information about SDP's finances and mission are posted for the general public. The City of Philadelphia posts detailed information about spending, individual salary amounts, and contracted services spending on the city's website, though not based on the U. S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes a high level of autonomy under Pennsylvania's regulations specifically at the secondary level. School districts have the authority to determine what constitutes a high school course and its completion. Further, advanced students can test out of a course without having any seat time which ensures a personalized learning environment of these students. One missing critical component to ensure positive implementation of the personalized learning environments K-8 is the lack of evidence of the successful conditions or autonomy in place at the elementary and middle school. The narrative does not indicate to what extent the conditions or autonomy exist at this level.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has strong evidence of stakeholder support for the proposal as evidenced by numerous attached letters of support from parent /political/community based organizations and post-secondary institutions. The only lack of evidence of support comes in the form of no letters of support from educators, while it is true the Principals Association wrote a letter of support, there is no evidence of teacher support or buy-in. This is a crucial component in determining the overall success of the reform as educators are key to the implementation of systemic/sustainable change. There is some evidence that engagement of stakeholders may take place in the future to refine the current proposal, in the form of the School Advisory Councils (when schools are chosen through the selection criteria) however there is little evidence to suggest that a diverse group of stakeholders were involved in the development of the initial proposal.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant completed a sound gap analysis though the Gates Foundation Proficiency-Based Pathways project which identified the need for stronger technology skills for educators as well as having appropriate hardware as keys to implement the proposed reforms to impact the additional gap in Literacy which was also identified in the analysis. Further, the plan calls for hiring a Technology Integration Specialist at each school to develop building technology plans and support teachers as they acquire necessary technology skills to promote the individual personalized learning system proposed. The plan is sound but does not address timelines for implementation nor responsible parties. These are critical elements which provide details for monitoring effectives of projects.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a strong plan which meets the required attributes with the following notable exceptions; there are no identified responsible parties for monitoring the implementation progress, nor any concrete timeline for implementation. The narrative calls for the inclusion of technology integrated/competency-based learning opportunities. The district proposes

utilization of a variety of commercial programs to adapt instruction to accommodate high needs students while providing relevant data to educators, students, and parents. Further, meaningful learning experiences in the upper grades and high school (delivered by core content teachers) brings real-world project-based relevance into the classroom. These components tied with the adoption of Pennsylvania Common Core Standards and the StudentNet student data program allow all students (and their families) to assess their own progress while incorporating different perspectives of learning across content, thus mastering critical content in order to produce a solid foundation for student achievement. Finally, appendices 18-22 provide extensive background about specific programs described in the narrative of C1 and the 5 Year Strategic Plan for Career and Technical Education places great emphases on quality, access, and equity in the CTE programming. Again the applicant has a strong plan to ensure a personalized learning environment for all students with the exception of identifying a timeline of implementation or a responsible party for monitoring implementation progress. These are critical elements in effective implementing and monitoring that must be addressed to ensure full positive academic impact for students hence the reduction in points.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a detailed highly structured plan which interweaves the attributes in a comprehensive and coherent manner so as to describe the solid foundation proposed to improve teaching practices. One high quality feature is the outline which identifies each sub-attribute along with an action plan to address it followed by the rationale behind choosing the course of action. The applicant addresses supporting teachers and administrators to improve instruction and increase their ability to support student progress toward being college and career ready in the following ways:

extensive job-embedded professional development to include data analysis, peer observations, co-teaching with specialists, action research,

problem-based learning, construction and scoring of common assessments, etc.

Additionally, a Technology Integration Specialist will be assigned to each school to develop school level PD plans. Thus ensuring that educators have information to identify optimal learning approaches as well as high quality learning resources and tools (Partnership with National Writing Project to create tasks, modules, and courses designed to teach students to meet the CCSS Literacy Standards) as well as providing continuous feedback to educators.

There is no clear delineation of responsibilities nor a clear link describing how the proposed Executive Level Seminar will ensure that the structures are effective in building learning environments at the school level. Additionally, there is no evidence of a plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals specifically in high needs schools. Rather the narrative provided in the proposal focuses on recruitment strategies such as making use of The Philadelphia Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, and Troops to Teachers Programs rather than specifically identify strategies for placing highly qualified teachers/principals in critical positions. These are critical components for the proposal to be effectively implemented so crucial that they resulted in the reduction of the score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative outlines a strong plan for the LEA to provide support and services to all participating schools ensuring that the necessary Infrastructure is in place for personalized learning experiences. The central office will continue to require schools to collect data on site while providing more school autonomy and flexibility in scheduling, calendars, budgets, and staffing models. Additionally, the central office will provide instructional specialists to work with schools and support implementation of school level plans which will facilitate the development of personalized learning experiences for students . These critical components ensure high buy in and positively impact student achievement by fostering a positive climate and culture. The plan does, additionally, outline a strong call for student opportunities to progress by demonstrated mastery. Students may participate in the Information Technology Career Pipeline (by participating in the Franklin Learning Center, Science Leadership Academy, and the High School of the Future) allowing students to attain journeyperson's certificates. This is a well articulated plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provides all stakeholders the support and resources they need.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a strong infrastructure support plan as evidenced by leveraging several Federal and State sponsored grants to ensure classrooms are infused with the necessary technology, SDP has an existing Information Technology Career Pipeline to provide students with additional opportunity to excel in career pathways, and SDP has an IT Help Desk to serve as support for employees and partners, and integration of the Oracle database to serve as gateway and repository for student data. The level of detail within the plan thoughtful organization and content ensures the overall creditability of the plan. Which, in turn will ensure that personalized learning environment will impact student achievement. Finally the proposal outlines a plan to provide learning resources that are fully accessible to all students in the form of Comcast Internet Essentials (program offering internet access for less than $10 month), SDP Parent University (collaborative effort between Offices of Educational Technology and Parent Engagement to provide workshops to parents), and the Freedom Rings Partnership (Parental trainings offered in community "KEYSPOTS") and the Free Library of Philadelphia.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a robust plan to continuously monitor progress. The plan is high quality in the model of providing timely and regular feedback on progress and in monitoring progress, and in the level of specific details given about the process of data collection and stakeholder feedback surveys. The process is as follows; The District Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and an external consultant will conduct a mixed-method quasi-experimental, cluster-randomized evaluation around five key research questions (1. Is the program being implemented as intended? 2. Do schools with the program show changes in relationships across teachers, students, instruction, and learning? 3. Do schools with the program show improved learning, socio-behavioral, and college/career ready outcomes for students compared to schools that do not have the program? 4. How does variation in program characteristics and implementation relate to program success and school, student, and classroom outcomes? 5. How do moderating school background factors and student characteristics affect program implementation and student outcome?) The evaluation will focus on the degree to which the program achieves the intended short and long term outcomes. The narrative outlines the data collection times and expected impacts of the proposed reform package. The narrative does not address how the general public will be informed of the results. The overall plan is sound with the noticeable lack of planning to inform the public, this is a critical component to ensure transparency which resulted in reduced points.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a sound plan for ongoing communication and engagement of the internal stakeholders with monthly data briefs and quarterly evaluation meetings, with discussions centering around the districts progress toward program goals and fidelity of implementation. The external stakeholders, however, are relegated to once yearly data briefs with no details indicating any level of engagement of these stakeholders evidenced in the narrative. Specifically, the narrative indicates that external stakeholders will be informed at yearly intervals, however this is no evidence to indicate that the stakeholders will be engaged in any sort of feedback loops (conversations) which will impact the project as far as program adjustments or revisions during implementation. This is a critical component to external buy-in and support which will aid the LEA in sustaining the proposed reform package.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a strong plan with deep thought and specificity in the aligned Indicators for On-Course for College and Career-Ready program. The proposal does not include teacher and principal effectiveness performance indicators as the district (through the RRT imitative) is in the process of implementing an evaluation system which will use 2014-15 as a baseline to project performance measures. The schools have yet to be determined so the required tables could not at this time be filled out, however, the narrative outlines the rationale for selecting each measure; as well as how the measure will provide formative information tailored to the proposed plan of action and how each measure will be reviewed to gage implementation progress. The proposal has aligned achievable performance targets that will ensure student academic growth. While strong, the plan does not completely address all the required components in the form of no current measures to evaluate effective educators or principals, though an explanation is provided, the applicant choose not include current Highly Qualified statistics

as a starting point, thus resulting in a reduction of points.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not directly address the criterion in this section, however, the information presented in B1 and E3 addresses evaluation of the proposed activities. The applicant did not address nor present evidence about how the plan would be evaluated for effectiveness of investment. This is a critical component that ensures the overall stability of the proposal in that modifications may need to be made to ensure the greatest impact for all students.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed budget and tables are detailed (including a description of all requested RTT-D funds), reasonable, and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed program of reform. In addition to the grant funds, the LEA proposes to make use of Race to the Top State grant, School Improvement Grant, Federal Funds, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants, and Middleton Family grant to fully impact student achievement for 28,000-35,000 students. The budget proposal has a detailed budget overview for each of the four key projects; Early Literacy, Elementary/Middle school blended learning, High Schools, and Professional Development/Resource Development. The proposal completely identifies all funds that will support the proposed reform package.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan which calls for leveraging private as well as state, local, and Federal funds to sustain the proposed reform. The applicant plans to make use of continued funding by the Gates Foundation and the Middleton Family grants along with the State RTT and SIG grant funding. The Evidence of state support for sustainability is the new teacher evaluation project which will change the way teachers are evaluated by including a measure to use student achievement data in evaluation of educators. The Mayor's office will continue to support the project's goals by placing emphases on specific goals to improve high school graduation rates. The applicant did not provide evidence of a high quality plan in the form of Key Goals, Timeline, or Responsible Party for each goal, thereby resulting in reduced points for this section of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has a strong Competitive Preference Priority by utilizing a detailed narrative with applicable tables. The applicant provides a detailed description of the partnerships with the public as follows; SDP, the City of Philadelphia, and the Penn Center of Educational Leadership, the Penn Child Research Center, and the National Center on Fathers and Families. Additionally, the applicant identifies the tracking indicators desired along with targeted results in detailed bulleted narrative. The applicant addresses the use of data with a detailed description of how to track indicators and using Data to target resources. The applicant proposes scaling the model into a threefold direction which include Expanding PCES from Pre-K to 3rd, expanding EPIC into the District Pre-K and kindergarten in participating schools, and Creating a system of mentor teachers throughout the district. The proposal will track progress through the use of an integrated data system model to address human development in societal context. The applicant will make academic success and measuring of a variety of

socio-emotional factors a priority. Finally, the applicant presents well aligned and appropriate performance measures with the required desired results described. This is a strong, overall well-articulated proposal with clear and thoughtful partnerships geared to drastically improve students' success and academic improvement.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurances to create personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching for individual students and educators. This is a highly specific plan which provides educators and students with the necessary (tightly aligned to College and Career State Standards) tools to ensure a significant improvement in student achievement for the districts high needs students with provisions for the advanced students to have extended opportunities to demonstrate mastery of content. Finally, the applicant demonstrates evidence of the necessary components to ensure all students will achieve academic success as well as experience social-emotional growth as well.

Total	210	168

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan targeting high school ELL students that is clear and coherent, though not overly innovative. The proposed project includes the following: a dual language Spanish and Latino studies program where approximately half the students are native speakers of the partner language and approximately half of the class are English speaking students with the goal of providing a two-way language immersion program. The school will utilize bilingual teachers to assist students who speak very little English and will build around the Career and Technical Education program in Communications. The applicant proposes running the program between Olney Charter Highs School (partner LEA as it is managed by ASPIRA) and the School District of Philadelphia. There is no evidence in the narrative of a projected timeline or key goals for each activity. These are essential components of a High Quality plan with ensure faithful implementation of the proposal.

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1316PA-3 for The School District of Philadelphia

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (1) The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) RTT-D application begins with a comprehensive, coherent, and compelling vision for reform and articulates a clear and credible approach to accelerate &and deepen student learning and increase equity through personalized student support.

The new Superintendent is working with the city's mayor to increase college/career readiness through leveraging funding from a variety of external partners and foundations including the Harvard Strategic Data Project and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.   Appendix 4 includes a list of 'On Course for College and Career" indicators for success developed by the SDP's College-Going Work Group; this in-depth overview includes the indicator and performance level needed for Kind. - 12th grade students to indicate college/career readiness. These indicators provide a compelling framework for the implementation of its requested RTT-D grant that will work with a targeted group of 1,000 teachers and 22,500 students (out of the district's total student population of 200,000) to establish a foundation of success as the basis for scaling up across the district's remaining schools.

The SDP has produced an impressive document that outlines a detailed outline of the ELA & Math CCSS-aligned skills and concepts that students are expected to acquire by the end of each grade level with quarterly planning, content and timelines. This remarkable work and should serve as a very helpful resource for classroom teachers as they transition to the more rigorous CCSS that require significant shifts in instructional practices and curriculum emphasis -- all of which are developed around accelerating the percentage of students who will be college/career ready.

The SDP has a comprehensive, integrated Instructional Management System based on SchoolNet with portals for educators, students, and families. Its longitudinal data system meets most of the America COMPETES elements and the DQC's State Actions and is working to address those not yet addressed.   The SDP also has a comprehensive Talent Development System including support for new and struggling teachers through PAR and mentors. By June, 2013, 100% of its principals and 50% of its teachers will be trained in the state Danielson-based teacher evaluation system.

The RTT-D proposal involves working with 30-35 selected schools that are committed to implementing intensive elementary level literacy support, establishing 'in-seat' plus digital learning in middle school math & science, integrating best practices from career & Tech. Ed. (CTE), and increasing student options through modularized on-line learning.

Overall, the applicant's coherent and comprehensive reform vision builds on the required four assurance areas and offers a compelling picture for developing more personalized learning environments for the district's students, especially those with high needs.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (2) The SDP is deliberately focusing on the entire K-12 continuum to foster a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for preparing all students for college and careers. SDP will select high needs schools through an internal application process based on leadership and staff commitment, school demographics, and evidence of vision in the state-required school comprehensive planning document. About 17 - 24% of the district's students will participate of whom approximately 88% will be from low-income families, and about 33% of eligible students have scored 'Below Basic" in the PSSA reading or math assessments. In a previous section it was noted that about 1,000 educators will be involved in the RTT-D project.

The applicant's selection process is solid and the approximate numbers of participants is provided.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (3) This section outlines the next eight years of district-wide changes in policies and practices based on the recommendations of the College Going Work Group. It is very helpful that the district has already identified the indicators that have a high predictability and correlation with college/career readiness.

Reflecting a research-based theory of change, the district will foster expanded collaborative learning/sharing among teachers and among principals (an oft over-looked but significant element in district-wide reform); focus professional development on critical areas including early literacy, Algebra I and Geometry, and college/career counseling; grant more flexibility and

decision-making to principals/schools to identify specific & local student supports; ensure more standards-based consistency across subjects and schools; and revise promotion and graduation policies based on college/career ready indicators. These are connected to ongoing monitoring, feedback and longitudinal tracking of student progress, teacher implementation, and principal support for RTT-D projects -- and enjoy a solid commitment from the College Going Work Group.

However, there is a concern that there is a lack of an explicit plan to scale up reforms from the approximately thirty-five RTT-D targeted schools to the plethora of other low performing/ high needs schools in the district. For instance, tracking the implementation of the scaling up of successes from the schools that will benefit from RTT-D resources will be far more efficient if the district is clear about its plan for how and when this will occur, and who will be responsible for ensuring such expansion takes place into the following cohorts of selected schools. Without these clearly delineated, the response does not fully respond to the criteria for a high quality plan.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (4)   This section includes the district's ambitious and achievable goals for accelerating the increase in the number of students scoring advanced (not just basic or even proficient) on the PSSA reading or math test as well as decreasing the percentage of students by subgroup scoring below Basic by subgroup. Through intensive literacy instruction, blended learning, technology integration and increased personalization, the district intends to close the achievement gap for all groups so that it is at or below 11% by 2016-17. The district's K-12 approach to college/career readiness is expected to increase the rates of high school graduation and college enrollment; both sets of targets are spelled out in annual district-wide targets for SY 2011-12 through SY 20-16-17. In all the accompanying tables, information is provided for the overall student population and by sub-groups.

The target goals for the state are not provided so it is not evident if the district's goal meet or exceed state ESEA targets. Also, it is of concern that the graduation goals appear achievable at a projected increase of two to three percentage points per year -- but such goals are not compelling as 'ambitious.' Similarly, the goals for increased college enrollments are targeted at an increase of only one or two percentage points per year (achievable but not ambitious).

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (1) The district works with the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success (PCCCS) to support the city Mayor's 2017 goals to increase the graduation rate to 80%, to cut the drop out rate in half, and to double the number of students earning baccalaureate degrees. The district has also established a strong partnership from The College Going Work Group to improve rigor, relevance, and personalization in classroom instruction. The district has also begun to leverage partnerships with literacy organizations, IHEs and local businesses, a valuable step as the district continues to face dire financial circumstances and deep budget reductions.

There is evidence of some early successes in working towards the city/district goals, such as an increase from 2009 to 2011 of six percentage points (from 60 - 66%) for first-time 9th graders to be on track for graduation, and an increase of five percentage points for the percentage of students graduating from high school within four years (56% to 61%). However for this two year comparison there is no evidence of how these statistics break down by sub-group. This is important to track as table A4c indicates that the SY 2011-12 graduation rate was 63% overall, but there was a significant difference between Hispanic/Latino students (55%) and students on IEPs (44%) compared to graduation rates of Whites (67%) and Asians (79%). Overall, the applicant presents an inconsistent 'track record of success' in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity. For instance, despite the early successes noted above, from SY 2010-11 to SY 2011-12, after a decade of consistent improvements, there was an overall decline of 8.7% points in math and 7.1 % points in reading and cohort dropout rates stagnated.

The district's Renaissance Schools Initiative sponsored Promise Academies and Renaissance Charter schools; these are described as potential turn-around models for its lowest performing schools. The Feb., 2012, report [see Appendix 11] prepared for the district's Accountability Review Council by the Research for Action provides a mixed profile of early progress in these schools. On the one hand the report notes that in Year One both models made strong positive gains toward improving student attendance and achievement in both math and reading compared to identified comparison schools. Year Two case studies point to an emerging set of promising practices that appear to be related to the success of these schools. However, the report cites massive budget cuts, general uncertainty of future funding, high levels of teacher turnover, significant staff and programmatic reductions, an over-reliance on direct instruction and compromised teacher morale as impacting these schools. The report notes that questions remain as to the extent that these models can be scaled up/ replicated and whether the initial rate of growth in student achievement can be sustained.

Student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents through the IMS and RtII. FamilyNet provides parents with extensive information about grades, attendance, assessments & test scores, and assignments. It is not clear how many families in the "deep poverty" schools where over 90 to 95+% qualify as low income actually have the necessary computers/electronic tools and continuous internet access to access such resources. Noteworthy is that this issue of technology and broadband access has been identified and the district is working with a variety of city and community agencies/organizations to provide multiple options, locations and media through which parents can access information and support resources for their children. For instance Appendix 12 lists projects sponsored by Comcast Internet, SDP Parent University, Freedom Rings Partnership, and Free Library of Philadelphia -- all of which already hold genuine promise for expanding low cost internet access, parent education (last year Parent University registered 38,000 parents), and a multitude of computer literacy classes.

This section provides evidence that the applicant recognizes gaps in equity, for instance between those above and below the poverty line regarding access to on-line resources, and the significant gaps in achievement by subgroups -- notably the differences in graduation rates between Asians and Whites compared to Hispanic/Latino and SpEd students. However the district documents its efforts to marshal internal and external resources to address these gaps in equity of access to internet resources during out of school hours and the significant gaps between various groups in terms of high school graduation and various academic markers for college/career readiness.

Overall, the applicant's "track record of success" is inconsistent, as evidenced by the recent SY2010-11 to SY 2011-12 decline of 8.7 percentage points in math and 7.1 percentage points in reading and the flat (no decrease) in the percentage of high school students who fail to graduate. In addition, the Renaissance Schools are noted as a model for reforming high poverty schools that will improve college/career readiness, but the early evaluations of those schools are inconclusive and point to mixed results. But despite huge budget cuts and the on-going challenges of almost universal high needs schools, the district appears committed to implementing reforms that will improve teacher/principal effectiveness and support students to become far better prepared for college and careers.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (2) In June, 2011, the district entered in an agreement with the city's mayor and the state's DOE known as Philadelphia's 'Education Accountability Agreement' whose purpose is to ensure that detailed information about the SDP's finances and mission are available to the general public on its website. This includes individual salary amounts and non-personnel expenditures such as contracts.

The applicant fails to meet the requirement that personnel salaries must be based on the US Census Bureau's F-33 classifications. In addition there is a lack of evidence that the district provides actual <u>school level</u> salaries for teachers and instructional staff as well as information on actual school-level non-personnel expenditures.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (3) The applicant's state specifies high school graduation requirements including course completion and grades, completion of a culminating projects, results of local assessments (aligned with state academic standards), and a demonstration of proficiency at the Proficient level or better in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics on either the state grade 11/12 assessment or local assessments aligned with the academic standards and state assessment. There are no minimum hours of seat-time specified, an encouraging change in state policy that allows districts considerably more flexibility in providing anytime/anywhere learning opportunities for students. Local districts also have the autonomy to determine what constitutes "a course" and its completion. All of these recent changes indicate a positive state context for this district to implement its intended RTT-D reform plan at the high school level; there is a lack of explicit information about possible implications for elementary level changes.

In addition, beginning in 2014-15, a school district may allow students who score at the Advanced level on a particular end-of-course Keystone Exam prior to taking the course to be granted credit without having to complete the course. Students who demonstrate this mastery could then accelerate their credit accrual and have the option for more advanced courses or college level dual credit options. In addition the state's DOE has an on-line library of resources, tools, and materials (Standards Aligned System or SAS) to support personalized learning. This will allow districts additional autonomy to provide more options for advanced students, some of whom may be from low income families.

The applicant functions in a state where city mayors, the state legislature, and the DOE have significant requirements of local districts. Within this context, there remains sufficient autonomy, especially beginning in 2014-2015, for the district to implement the proposed projects to develop and enhance personalized learning options and environments, particularly at the high school levels. It is not clear if waiting until year after next for some of these changes at the state level will create any potential barriers for the district to implement its intended reforms in the following eighteen months.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (4) Since 2010 the applicant's primary tool for parent involvement has been the creation and implementation of School Advisory Councils (SACs); in the district's 200+ schools, there are now 38 active SACs, 75 that are forming, and 17 that exist in Renaissance Schools. These are described as serving as a forum for exchanging ideas among educators, parents, students, and community members about how to improve student achievement. However there is a lack of evidence that parents were involved (directly &/or through SACs) in providing feedback to drafts of the RTT-D proposal-- or that if provided, such feedback was ever integrated into subsequent drafts.

Appendix 11's Research for Action report (Feb., 2012) on Renaissance Schools includes an Appendix A that gives an overview of SACs based on data gathered between Sept. 2011 and Jan., 2012. This report cites data from the "Our City -- Our Schools" coalition that notes fall 2011 data that 55 districts schools with 18 working on creating one, suggesting that this component of Renaissance schools was already being replicated in other school settings. The report also notes that it has been a challenge, especially initially, for SACs to develop positive relationships with their schools' principals (regarding decision-making, accountability, etc.), to obtain resources, and to recruit parents. The report suggests that SACs hold promise for "on-going strides forward in school-community relations" and recommends that more research is needed to analyze the ways in which SACs actually contribute to neighborhood and school improvement.

The district's School Reform Commission's Office Parent, Family, Community Engagement & Faith Based Partnership has published a SAC Handbook, a really excellent resource that outlines suggested ways to include SAC members (and their roles and responsibilities), procedures for holding effective meetings, how to self-assess to measure success, guidelines for decision-making, etc. At least 51% of any given SAC must be parents/legal guardians of children attending that school, with the other members representing a broad array of community stakeholders. The initiation of SACs is commendable; however there is a lack of evidence about how well the SACs are actually functioning and their influence in addressing issues related to the improvement of student achievement.

Appendix 15 includes seven letters of support, five of them very similar letters with the same basic wording. These letters represent important people and organizations such as the state's school administrators association, the city mayor, Communities in Schools, the Philadelphia Home and School Council, and the Children's Literacy Initiative. There is a glaring lack of support letters from businesses, civil rights organizations, students, or parent organizations (such as SACs). In

addition, there is no evidence of letters of support from individual teachers, teacher leaders, or teacher bargaining units. This narrow range and number of support letters can be an indication of a lack of essential informed support for the overall RTT-D proposal and a lack of commitment to its implementation, especially among teachers.

Overall, the district describes its efforts to expand meaningful stakeholder engagement and support of its reform efforts, but there is a lack of evidence that teachers and parents were meaningfully involved in the key areas of developing and supporting the RTT-D proposal, or that schools and the district actually seek and utilize the input of SACs in their work to improve student outcomes.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (5)

The district is a current recipient of a $2.94 million Gates Foundation grant (June 2011 to June 2013) that funds a Digital Learning Network 'Proficiency-Based Pathways' project that involves 600 ninth graders in five high schools. It introduces students to a new model for English 1 content using blended learning and a proficiency-based assessment strategy. Appendix 16 describes the district's Gates project goal as creating a digital learning network that includes Individual Learning Plans, SMART goals, and competency-based, technology-rich 'anytime/ anywhere' learning opportunities. Performance-based assessments involve the application of skills in real-world settings, using content from Educurious.

The Pathways project pilots generated some successes and generated important recommendations for other necessary and logical changes in curriculum and instruction prior to students entering high school. For instance, the district's experience in the first year of the Gates project demonstrated that students needed stronger literacy skills in order to participate fully and successfully in a personalized, digitally-rich learning environment. As the applicant states, "Providing dynamic, cutting-edge tools is useless if students do not have the reading and analytical skills necessary to fully engage and utilize these tools for maximum impact." In response, the RTT-D proposal pro-actively begins its focus on learning to read in the primary grades.

For students already at the upper elementary through high school levels, there will be supports and interventions to shore up students' reading levels and new Technology Integration Specialists to help implement a technology literacy skills curriculum for students working in classrooms and school computer labs. A text-rich learning environment will provide students with hard copy and digital materials reflecting a diversity of cultures and topics of interest.

The applicant has completed an analysis of needs and gaps in the areas of technology and literacy. There is a lack of information about similar work in analyzing the needs and gaps regarding the use (by teachers, administrators, students and families) of data systems such as SchoolNet IMS, or the recruitment and retaining of effective/highly effective teachers/principals -- both of which are focus areas in this RTT-D proposal.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C) (1) Learning

In this extensive response the applicant describes the RTT-D programs and projects that will support more intensive and extensive literacy instruction and personalized learning opportunities that are intended to lead to improved graduation rates and college/career readiness (based on the district's On Course for College and Career Ready Indicators). This comprehensive list of high quality, research-based district initiatives together provide a well-documented overview of a strong plan for improving personalized learning that will improve all students' college/career readiness. The exception is the model for elementary students to rotate through work stations that provide opportunities to follow some of their individual interests (and the chance to work independently and collaboratively) but do not differentiate instruction based on individual needs. That is, it does not provide elementary students an individualized sequence of skills and content that will contribute to keeping on track for college/career readiness.

However the i3 partnership of the district and the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) holds great promise. Augmented by an infusion of hand-held mobile devices, the 48 classrooms in ten schools are implementing the CLI Model Classroom program that will, with RTT-D funds, expand into an additional 25 schools. this would bring CLI professional development, resources,

and reading materials to 350 additional K-3 classrooms. The intensive literacy focus continues into upper elementary and middle school grades with blended learning and continued guided reading instruction and practice with fiction but with increasingly more attention to informational and content area texts.

The applicant also describes successful strategies and programs to increase student ownership of career-related "real world" skills and knowledge, emphasizing blended learning, LDC and CLI literacy, STEM inquiry, multimedia research and generative work, STEM inquiry-based projects, blended learning, CTE instruction, ELOs, adaptive math, emphasis on learning mastery targets, 'next generation' learning modules, RtI/RtII, and proficiency-based teaching/learning.

In addition, the district utilizes a variety of commercial programs it has adapted to accommodate high needs students; these encourage choice, responsibility, and an increase of opportunities for students to manage their own learning. The district's plan includes a variety of mechanisms to support learning progressions, individual interests, collaboration, and mastery learning. There appears to be a coordinated approach to improvement that includes the implementation of Individual Learning plans, focus on the On Course for College and Career Ready indicators, and support for the action plans of the Superintendent, School Board and the College-Going Work Group.

Resources such as StudentNet, DRA, and CTB/McGraw Hill, will also be utilized to support the district's plan for personalizing content, instruction and assessment. Resources to implement this plan include extended, focused professional development (for instance through the Philadelphia Writing Project) and both local community/foundation support along with external government and private foundation grants. For instance the district has received a generous Gates Foundation Proficiency-Based Pathways grant and a $5.7 million Middleton Family grant (for CTE improvement initiatives).

The appendices 18-22 provide extensive background and information about the specific resources and programs described in C1. The SDP's Sept. 2012 - June 2017 Five Year Strategic Plan for the district's Career and Technical Education is particularly impressive, consistently stressing the goals of quality, access, and equity throughout all CTE programming.

Overall, this section documents the applicant's commitment to empower all learners, particularly high needs students, to become increasingly engaged in goal-setting, mastery learning, and an array of personalized learning opportunities that lead to college/career readiness.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C) (2) Teaching and Leading

This section describes a comprehensive and well-organized plan, grounded in a shared vision, with ambitious yet achievable goals for engaging 1,000 teachers in professional learning to enhance instructional expertise, reflecting individual and school-wide needs that are linked to accelerating student achievement. This is a potentially powerful model, reinforced as teachers use SchoolNet's PD Planner to draft their professional development goals/plans that will address mastery and digital learning as well as personalized and literacy learning.

There is an extensive design for job-embedded professional learning for teachers that includes analyzing student data, case studies, peer observation or visitations, simulations, co- teaching with peers or specialists, action research, peer and expert coaching, observing and analyzing demonstrations of practice, problem-based learning, inquiry into practice, study groups, data analysis, constructing and scoring assessments, examining student or educator work, lesson study, video clubs, professional reading, or book studies. As teachers successfully experience a wider variety of ways they can extend their own instructional skills and content knowledge, students may be more likely to expand their own pathways to mastery of both required standards and optional areas of interest. In addition, collaborative technology tools and resources offers the capacity to personalize, differentiate, and deepen learning for both teachers and students.

School-based Technology Integration Specialists, informed by survey results, will utilize multiple delivery models to help build teachers' tech. literacy skills as well as enhanced skills and knowledge regarding master, digital, personalized and overall literacy learning. Specifically, professional development will be enhanced through the Children's Literacy Initiative's model classroom program (supported with an i3 grant) that will expand to 25 more schools that will bring the CLI professional development resources and reading materials to PLCs and 350 more K-3 classrooms of children. Professional Development partnerships aslso include work with the Literacy Design Collaborative and the National Writing Project.

There is much less attention given to supporting school administrators with high quality professional development targeted at improving leadership skills necessary for coaching and supporting teachers in the RTT-D plan's implementation, especially in the area of instructional improvement. For instance there is a lack of of a compelling comprehensive plan to train school administrators in balanced literacy or how to motivate teachers so that the projects will be implemented consistently and with fidelity.

High quality interim student assessment data will provide educators with ongoing and timely information needed for improving personalized teaching and learning, including multi-tiered RtI systems of support. The district's overall Educator Effectiveness initiatives will support CCSS-aligned instructional strategies -- and provide ongoing data to teachers and principals to see how students are performing (based on the extent of effective teaching) and how instruction may need to change.

An intensive Summer Institute, followed by quarterly, after-school and week-end PD meetings, will offer (but not require) participating teachers, principals and school leadership teams with additional training, shared tools and resources. The district will establish a Highly Qualified Teacher Recruitment, Certification, and Retention Unit to help recruit great teachers and attract mid-career non-education majors. It also has valuable partnerships for recruiting and supporting effective teachers through programs such as the Philadelphia Teaching Fellows, The New Teacher Project, Teach for America, and Troops to Teachers, and the STEM Literacy Fellows program. A cadre of internal Consulting Teachers plan and implement intensive interventions and support for new and struggling teachers.

Overall, this section details a high quality plan that addresses most of the C2 criteria and combines intensive and targeted individual professional development with district-wide support systems to enable all students, but particularly high needs students from low/lowest performing schools, to accelerate their college/career readiness. There is more limited evidence concerning how the plan will increase the number and percentage of students who will have effective/highly effective teachers and principals. There is also a lack of evidence of some of the components of an overall high quality plan such as describing timelines, deliverables and who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the described initiatives that will improve personalized learning environments leading to increased college/career readiness.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**14**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D) (1)   The applicant district has no one single model for personalized learning and instead continues to evolve a constellation of effective practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. This results in a healthy balance of state-wide requirements and district-wide structures and resources that still allows responsiveness to local school needs and cultures. For instance the district provides schools flexibility and autonomy over schedules, calendars, personnel decisions & staffing models, and school level budgets.

Whole school reform models such as the Franklin Learning Center, the Science Leadership Academy, and the High School of the Future, provide a 'learning lab' for scalable innovations particularly for their approach to giving students ways to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Since schools in an earlier section are listed by number rather than by name, there is no evidence provided to describe the demographics of each of these promising reform model schools that have 100% graduation rates; for instance there is no information about what percentage of their students are 'high needs' &/or the percentage of students whose families are low income. There is a lack of information as to why these high school reform models have not been replicated throughout the district.

Career and Technical Education programs are expanding to increase to 12,000 'seats' within five years, and the Gates Proficiency Based Pathways, Alternative Education programs and Lexia Reading software offer additional student opportunities for achieving mastery. Students learning English and those with disabilities are provided extra support through modifications of SchoolNet resources and Spanish translations of key items. The Common Core Strategies Guide and Companion Guide provide teachers with expanded instructional guidelines and suggested assessment practices for supporting students with diverse learning needs. This section provides very convincing information about the applicant's LEA policies, infrastructure and programs that offer high school students with a multitude of resources to facilitate personalized learning and to earn course credits based on demonstrated mastery; there is less evidence of similar opportunities for elementary aged students to master standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D) (2) Presently there are 3,880 'tech ready' classrooms across the district. As the district expands the number and quality of technology-infused classrooms, Tech. Integrators and the district's IT Help Desk are available to resolve various tech problems, essential so that technology can appropriately help prepare students to excel in a 21st Century learning environment. Working with various external stakeholders, the district has established an IT Career "Pipeline" (now in its 8th

year) to prepare interested students for tech-related careers. In the last two years, 210 youth have served as Digital Service Fellows and since 2004 eighty-one have apprenticed with the Computer Support Specialist program, a modest number, but ten of the latter now work for the district.

There is an acknowledged issue concerning low income families' access to digital resources. The applicant states that 41% of families do not have access to broadband, and in some neighborhoods fewer than 20% subscribe to a high speed internet service. No information is provided about the number of students this impacts. However this issue is presently being addressed by a variety of low cost options and collaborative efforts described in a previous section of the application (Comcast Internet Essentials, SDP Parent University, Freedom Rings Partnership, Phila. libraries, etc.).

The district has also invested in Pearson Learning and in Oracle's database system that create interoperability between and among systems -- and provides open data exchange using XML and industry-accepted interchange formats. Overall, the LEA and school infrastructure is a combination of older and newer systems/hardware/software and the district is still working with the community to develop a higher level of access to internet based resources for low income families (and for students during out of school hours).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (1) This section describes the district's comprehensive and in-depth plan to ensure continuous and on-going improvement in teacher/principal effectiveness and the degree to which students accelerate their progress and college/career readiness as a result of more intensive &/or more extensive RTT-D funded resources, programs, strategies and supports.

The district's internal Office of Research and Evaluation will work with an external contractor to conduct a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) evaluation throughout and immediately after the RTT-D implementation timeline. This thoughtful evaluation plan looks at both short and long term outcomes with approximately 35 schools in the 'treatment' group (those receiving RTT-D based supports) and about 35 schools in a non-treatment matched comparison group. In total, data will be collected on about 70 schools and 1,700 classrooms -- and approximately 50,000 students, half of whom are participants in RTT-D activities. This plan is impressive and should generate extensive information to provide in-depth and comprehensive formative and summative data that can be used for ongoing corrections/improvements and a plethora of information about "what works" (or what does not) in terms of interventions, supports, strategies, programs, and other RTT-D project components. There is a clear plan outlined in Table 1 for collecting data at the beginning and/or end of years 2012-13 through 2016-17 regarding Program Implementation (in the intervention group of schools) and Outcomes (for both the intervention group of schools and the comparison group of schools).

The overarching evaluation/research questions target essential questions and reflect a useful, focused and comprehensive plan. The evaluators will examine fidelity of implementation, changes in relationships, improvement of student outcomes, and the extent that other factors such as "school background factors and student characteristics" impact student outcomes. The ORE staff &/or external evaluator will also conduct structured interviews and observations, document reviews, and hold focus groups with students, teachers, and parents.

The matrix describing the data collection plan makes sense. However there is an absence of detailed information in this section about how all the extensive formative evaluation information will be used to continuously improve the quality and impact of the RTT-D investment projects or how interim results will be publicly shared on an on-going, regular basis. On the other hand, the response to the following section, E2, includes information about how the district's Office of Research and Evaluation will produce monthly data briefs for program and comparison schools to monitor student outcomes on a regular basis. In addition the ORE will hold quarterly and annual evaluation meetings with program staff and school administrators to review progress towards program goals and fidelity of implementation; annual reports and data briefs will be shared with external stakeholders.

It is not clear what the district intends to do if certain program elements show little or no impact -- or, if certain elements are found to be highly successful, how these strategies and resources might be immediately brought to scale in more schools. Such 'course corrections' are important for on-going plan improvement. In addition, the applicant provides limited information how it would share timely data on the quality/value of its RTT-D investments with various internal and external stakeholders. Overall, in spite of these modest gaps, the plan for continuous improvement is of good quality.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (2)

The Office of Research and Evaluation will produce monthly and annual reports/ data briefs and hold quarterly and annual meetings to discuss progress toward program goals and fidelity of implementation. There is a lack of information given in this brief response regarding the engagement of teachers, students, and parents in reviewing/discussing the interim reports and how stakeholders' feedback would be incorporated into on-going improvements.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (3) Performance measures are aligned with the district's On-Course for College and Career-Ready Indicators outlined in previous sections of the application (and in Appendix 4). Along with the required specific performance measures provided in this section's tables, the applicant provides helpful narrative background on each measure. These notes explain the research-based predictability regarding each measure and its correlation with increased levels of high school graduation and college/career readiness.   Information is provided for measures relating to educator effectiveness, Developmental Reading Assessment results, percentage of students chronically absent, PSSA Reading levels, Algebra I enrollment and grades, Geometry and English I grades, and AP and IB participation and scores. The applicant also describe its rationale for selecting the various measures, how each one will generate rigorous and timely information, and examples of how these will be changed/ improved if it is insufficient to determine implementation progress.

2014-15 will be used as the year for baseline year for measuring the number and percentage of participating students with effective/highly effective teachers and principals, since that is the year that the state's new educator evaluation system will be fully implemented.

Overall, the performance measures and their five year targets appear to be 'ambitious yet achievable.' For instance from SY2011-12 to SY2016-17, the percentage of K-3 African American students reading at DRA's Target level is projected to increase from 50% to 80% and ELL students from 39% to 63%.

On some measures, the performance of students in the baseline year is discouragingly low; for instance in SY2012-13, only 24% of 4th-8th grade Latino and African American students are on track to college/career readiness. Only 18% of 9th graders complete high school on time and persist into their second year of college.   Thus the projected post-grant outcome data may appear achievable though less than ambitious. For example, in SY2011-2012, only 7% of Latino students -- but 31% of Asian students -- took an AP or IB exam; in SY2016-17 only a modest 12% of Latinos are projected to do so. Similarly, only 39% of 4th-8th grade Latino and African American students are projected to be on track to college and career readiness in SY2016-17. It appears somewhat contradictory that 80% of African American 8th graders and 89% of Latino students are projected to receive a B or above in 8th grade Algebra in SY2016-17 (a marker closely connected to likely high school graduating and college/career readiness).

The rate of chronic absenteeism (missing more than 10% of enrolled school days during the year for any reason, whether excused or unexcused) was selected as a sensible non-cognitive leading indicator of social/emotional growth for students in all grade bands. The applicant cites recent research from the Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works, the National Center for Children in Poverty, and the Consortium on Chicago School Research that suggests that there is a strong correlation between chronic absenteeism, lower levels of literacy, "academic trouble," and higher drop-out rates. There is no evidence of a break-down by sub-group of the number and percentage of students completing and submitting the FAFSA form.

Overall, in spite of a few gaps and seemingly contradictory data, this section is well done with appropriate performance measures selected and a high-quality approach to continuously improve the student benchmarks and outcomes highlighted in the district's RTT-D plan.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (4)

There is no evidence of a separate response for E4 in the materials submitted.

However there is a comprehensive and in-depth evaluation plan in E1 that includes a robust qualitative and quantitative research design. The overarching questions include looking at the fidelity of implementation, changes in relationships (across teachers, students, instruction, and learning), several domains of outcomes, how varied program characteristics and implementation relation to program success/student outcomes, and the moderating impact of student characteristics and 'school background.' Data collection will occur through structured interviews and observations, document reviews, and focus groups with students, teachers, and parents. The data collection plan outlined in Table 1 (in E1) notes the timetable for each of these to be completed. Program impacts will be assessed through student assessments, parent surveys, teacher surveys, school records and web-based principal surveys. So although this section is not separately addressed in the application, the evaluation plan in E1 provides sufficient information to generate confidence that the evaluations will in fact be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed RTT-D activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F) (1) [Note: the budget summary tables and narratives are found after the Competitive Preference Priority response]

The applicant's budget includes detailed financial information, including a description of all requested RTT-D funds ($40 million) and other federal funds supporting these projects as well as a description of LEA, state and external foundation project-related support funds. It appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the RTT-D project components and provides thoughtful research-based rationales for each investment. Information is included that describes non-RTT-D funding sources include RTT-S funds, SIG & Title I funds, Gates Foundation and Middleton Family funds, and SDP operating funds.

The budget is comprehensive and appears to use RTT-D funds to strategically impact the further development and implementation of personalized learning environments. The proposed projects build on an established culture of data-driven instructional planning and a focus on literacy skills in the early grades. Project activities in the middle and high school grades continue the focus on literacy and the addition of online learning tools through LearningNet, blended learning, adaptive math, project-based STEM and will incorporate Educurious and proficiency based learning.

The budget invests heavily in technology and professional development with the learning management system providing resources both synchronously and asynchronously. The overall proposed projects will involve approximately 1,000 teachers serving 28,000 - 35,000 students with a high probability of scaling up promising practices, models, and strategies for accelerating career and college readiness.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(F) (2) Sustainability

There are solid plans for sustainability and an on-going commitment to the project's goals after the term of the grant. The district will capitalize on the lessons learned in the subset of participating schools receiving RTT-D resources, and will work to scale up these reforms district-wide. There is a commitment of continued support from the city's Mayor to promote the on-going work described in the proposal, particularly in the areas of improving rates of high school graduation and college matriculation/completion. In addition, the RTT-D project is aligned with policies and educational funding priorities at the state level, for instance regarding the evaluation of teachers and principals.

There is anticipation that there will be further funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to deepen the mastery-based anytime/anywhere personalized learning goals and that these new RTT-D options and supports will expand to other schools and other subject areas. In addition, there is the anticipation that the local district leadership will be responsive in terms of budgeted priorities based on the most promising results of the RTT-D activities. As the applicant states, "once proven to be effective, resources that are currently directed towards the sustainability of the status quo become available to sustain the new direction [as defined in its RTT-D proposal] across the district."

It is also commendable that the district is focusing on implementing promising "practices, systems, and processes" to improve teacher effectiveness and student performance outcomes, rather than relying entirely on specific hardware/software updates

that may not be purchased with district funds over the next five years (due to the severity of budget reductions). This capacity building holds tremendous potential for creating multiple options for more personalized teaching and learning that could be scaled up throughout the district.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Competitive Preference Priority describes an innovative collaboration between the district, the city of Philadelphia, and the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Centers for Educational Leadership, Child Research, and its National Center on Fathers and Families. The partnership will focus on a program of educational change for schools serving Pre-Kindergarten children throughout the district with the goal of developing, implementing, and evaluating an early childhood model that will more successfully prepare pre-schoolers for success in Kindergarten, First grade and beyond. This will involve an integrated program of enhancing academic skills in early literacy, language, and math as well as social emotional skills necessary to begin school "capable and prepared."

This is an exciting venture that will connect relevant health and human service agencies, schools and families so that low income and minority students in particular will be provided an engaging, nurturing educational environment that will help narrow the achievement gap before Kindergarten -- and hopefully maintain that engagement and level of success through 12th grade and beyond. Establishing a culture of achievement and success early on will serve to decrease chronic absences, thus ensuring a higher rate of long-term college/career readiness and significantly higher high school graduation rates. The partnership program will utilize the Kids Integrated Data System, the EPIC Integrated Check In assessments, and a system of mentor teachers.

Overall, this competitive preference priority is a thoughtful, creative, and innovative partnership project to vastly increase the capacity of staff in a host of domains related to accelerating the success of pre-school children so that they have the confidence and competence to continue their achievement levels in the following years. The project's goals appear ambitious and achievable with the potential for future scalability that holds great promise for supporting thousands of young children from the district's low income families become far more likely to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This compelling proposal describes a coherent and comprehensive approach for creating robust and innovative learning environments to significantly improve learning and teaching, especially for Philadelphia's high needs students. It is anticipated that these interventions and supports will result in fewer drop-outs and higher rates of high school graduates who are college and career ready. In addition, the plan calls for the most successful strategies and programs to be then implemented in similar high-poverty schools throughout the district.

Some of the particular strengths include the emphasis on early literacy and the collaboration between the district and the Children's Literacy Initiative, the National Writing Project, and U.Penn's graduate school. Tech. tools, such as LearningNet and other blended learning software, will address a variety of student learning styles and improve 'anytime/anywhere' learning opportunities. Adaptive math programs, Educurious and STEM modules are also supportive of personal learning and address the On Course for College and Career Ready Indicators. Those indicators are complemented by the College-Career Ready CCSS/PA Planning and Scheduling Timelines project. This provides an excellent resource for clarifying what students should be able to do at the end of each quarter in Math and ELA, outlining essential skills and content necessary for staying on track to be fully college/career ready.

The detailed proposal describes a compelling vision for improving educator effectiveness and its potential impact on accelerating student achievement and vastly improving high school graduation/ college matriculation rates. The RTT-D funds will target support in thirty-five schools that will provide models for scaling up promising practices across Philadelphia and in other districts (nationally) with similar challenges and demographic profiles.

Total	210	185

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	8

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

This optional budget supplement is a project to implement a dual language Spanish and Latino Studies program in one of the district's comprehensive high schools serving greater than 30% of Latino students. The two-way immersion program is research-based (although the research cited is not current, e.g. published beween 1992 and 2001) and supports the academic and social development of both English Language Learners and English-speaking students in a diverse and high quality environment that is based on research-based best practices.

The program will be built around a CTE program in Communications that promotes "soft skills" as well as language acquisition and rigorous project-based academics. The curriculum will be thematically integrated and aligned with the vision and goals of bi-lingualism, bilingual literacy, and multiculturalism. The innovative strand in this proposal is that half of the students in the program will be Spanish-dominant students with particular focus on those immigrant students who recently arrived from Spanish-speaking countries who may have little or no knowledge of the English language.

The goal for English proficient students is not particularly ambitious; for example, non-ELL Seniors will take AP Spanish and will still have 75% of their course content delivered in English. In addition, there is no persuasive rationale offered to explain why it is not until 11th grade/Junior year that ELL students and English-dominant (non-ELL) students will be integrated for their coursework/classes.

The program will be run at Olney Charter High School that is managed by ASPIRA and the school district of Philadelphia. The biggest challenge may be organizing the decision-making and shared responsibility for the program between the district and ASPIRA; there are no MOUs included in the submitted materials. Students will learn about audio recording, television, printing, digital design,and broadcasting -- thus developing knowledge and skills in a wide array of Communication services and systems. The applicant states that CTE coursework allows students to reinforce, apply, and transfer their academic learning to a variety of other activities, problems, and settings.

There is limited evidence that such a program, if successful for this limited number of participating students, could or would be replicated in other schools (especially non-charter high schools) throughout the district. An additional concern is that this section does not include specific details about the new program's implementation time-lines, persons responsible, and deliverables.